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SURFING THE WAVES OF POPULAR CULTURE  
BY MICHAEL GILTZ & FRIENDS

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## Here's A Mystery: Why Did "Da Vinci Code" Take Three Years To Hit Paperback?

Anchor Books announced today they'd print up some 5 million paperback copies of Dan Brown's runaway bestseller "The Da Vinci Code" for its March 28 release. The movie version -- starring Tom Hanks -- comes out May 19. Frankly, if the movie wasn't coming out, they might never have released a paperback. The publishing industry is in a slump (though still a \$20 billion business) and they wouldn't agree with me, but one big reason is paperbacks.

DVD sales exploded because they offered better quality at a lower price than VHS. But in the book world, they delay a paperback's release again and again and charge more and more for them. Instead of designing attractive "mass market" paperbacks at inexpensive prices, publishers push "trade paperbacks" that cost some \$14-\$16. Mass market editions (often about \$6 or \$7) come out *years* after a hardcover's release, if at all.

Publishers do everything they can to make those editions seem junky and unappealing, only suitable for airplane reads. It's even more frustrating for evergreen titles -- how frustrating is it to look up a 20 year old novel and find out it's only in trade and costs \$17 dollars?

And they wonder why people aren't snapping up books. So are any of you latecomers going to (finally) read "Da Vinci" when it comes out in paperback?

POSTED BY MICHAEL IN NEW YORK AT 1:47 PM



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